Seoul Journal of Japanese Studies Vol. 5, No.1 (2019): 45-80
Institute for Japanese Studies, Seoul National University

"Lineage of Eccentrics": The Popularization of Art History, or Rewriting Japanese Art History

CHOI Jaehyuk*

Abstract | In 1968, art historian Tsuji Nobuo categorized a number of Edo-era painters under the description "Lineage of Eccentrics." These were artists not bound to any art historical schools, but whose work was characterized by displays of bizarre and fantastical images. Since then, the concept of *kisō* (eccentric ideas) has acted as a driving force and an academic support for the phenomenon of the "Japanese art boom"—the popularity of Japanese traditional art since the 2000s. It has also contributed to the rediscovery of its representative artist, Itō Jakuchū.

The concept of *kisō* had an avant-gardist feature in that it denied conventional formality, and at the same time sought to become a new mainstream. In that pursuit, the concept enthusiastically embraced Western art styles such as Maniérisme and Surrealism in order to guarantee its universality. It also reflected the enthusiasm for postwar democracy by emphasizing the artless character of the populace. This effort in turn established a basis for writing pro-audience art history.

Furthermore, the concept of *kisō* sought to expand its boundaries as a genre to include not only paintings, but also crafts and everyday objects, through the key concepts of *asobi* (playfulness) and *kazari* (decorativeness) in its media. This allowed the idea of *kisō* to extend its lifespan as a concept not limited to the Edo era, but one which pertained to the entirety of Japanese art. In conjunction with the Japanese art boom, the concept was employed in writing easily comprehensible art history by using, in place of art historical jargon, more familiar terms such as expression, freedom, playfulness, decorativeness, humor, and the grotesque. This rewritten art history has been visualized in the form of "fun exhibitions" curated around themes of happiness, cuteness, and joy. The idea of *kisō* rejected elitism and oriented itself toward the general public. This allowed it to coexist readily with contemporary Japanese art that actively adopted subculture as its major theme. Japanese Neo-pop, as exemplified by the work of Murakami Takashi, and Murakami's "Superflat" aesthetic, is known to have been greatly influenced by Tsuji's *Lineage of Eccentrics* (2004), and it summons the painters of this lineage by means of parody and homage.

The concept of *kisō*, at first glance, might appear to be inconsistent and illogical, as it has advanced by embracing and rebuilding conflicting elements: the universal and the specific, the mainstream and the avant-garde, the yin and yang, and so on. However, one may say that it has been this flexibility that has permitted it successfully to gain the

* CHOI Jaehyuk (dizzypillow@gmail.com) is a specialist in Modern Japanese art history and visual culture.

popularity it has enjoyed.

Keywords | Lineage of Eccentrics, Japanese art boom, popular art history, Tsuji Nobuo, Itō Jakuchū, *asobi* (playfulness), *kazari* (decorativeness)

Jakuchū Boom

> "With a device that slowed down the brain speed to one-twentieth installed on my head, I walked through the Jakuchū exhibition. The experience after 300 minutes of waiting time ended only in fifteen minutes! I, however, could not take off the device inside the gallery and thus was soon swept away by the crowd all the way to the exit in what felt like a minute. I don't remember anything from the exhibition." (https://twitter.com/tkinokawa/status/733652479146004480)

> "I notice Jakuchū's painting of a crane hanging in a *tokonoma* [a recessed alcove in Japanese rooms] … Most of Jakuchū's paintings feature delicate, elaborate coloration, but this crane is painted with a single, nonchalant brushstroke. The slender appearance of the crane looks just right, standing on a single leg with an egg-shaped body lightly poised upon it. This seemingly unworldly grace continues down to the tip of its long beak." (Natsume 2005, 38)

The exhibition *The 300th Anniversary of His Birth: Jakuchū* was a record-breaking success for the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, with an unprecedented entry waiting time of as long as 320 minutes and 446,242 visitors ("2016-nen tenrankai" 2017).[1] The first quotation above was selected from among Twitter posts with a hashtag relating to Jakuchū Exhibition SF (*#JakuchūtenSF*), created to satirize this kind of "Jakuchū boom." The second describes a fictional narrator's Jakuchū experience, quoted from a late Meiji-era fiction work published more than a century ago. Natsume Sōseki's *Grass Pillow* (*Kusamakura*), first published in 1906, is perhaps the first work that introduced to the public the mid-Edo-era painter Itō Jakuchū (1716-1800). To the extent that Sōseki—who had a great influence over the prominence of the Taisho period's individual artists—sets forth his view on arts through his protagonist, who is a painter,

1. The exhibition was the fifth most popular in Japan in 2016 by art museum and museum visitor figures, but was the third among fine art exhibitions. Considering its short duration of just thirty-one days, much less than *Renoir: Masterpieces from the Musée d'Orsay and the Musée de l'Orangerie*, held at the National Art Center, Tokyo for 104 days—the most popular, with 660 thousand visitors—it is clear that the Jakuchū exhibition attracted the largest daily number of visitors that year.

various works feature in *Grass Pillow*.[2] Jakuchū's ink paintings, however, do not seem to have left much of an impression on readers, which may be due to the strong after-image left by a number of Western paintings, such as John Everett Millais' *Ophelia*, which was also closely associated with the story's climax.

Since the Meiji era, Jakuchū had been buried in oblivion, "away from the world," "away from people's eyes."[3] Art critic Kurokawa Sō once recalled that, when he revealed his plan to write about Jakuchū someday after first encountering the artist's works in the mid-1980s, even editors and journalists asked: "Who is this *Wakaoki* [the ideographic reading of Jakuchū's name]?" (Kurokawa 2009, 82).[4] As this episode suggests, only a very limited number of academics and art experts knew of Jakuchū, and his popularity in Japan is only a recent phenomenon.

Some examples of Japanese popular culture in the twenty-first century help one to understand such a change in Jakuchū's status. Utada Hikaru's music video "Sakura Drops," released in 2002, used images from Jakuchū's *Birds, Animals, and Flowering Plants in an Imaginary Scene* (*Chōjūkaboku-zu byōbu*) as well as *The Colorful Realm of Living Beings* (*Dōshoku sai-e*). Jakuchū's eccentric animals, digitally animated on screen, harmonized with vivid, dream-like scenery, proudly showcased this "Japanese favorite" singer-songwriter's refined taste. In 2007, filmmaker Miike Takashi made a type of cowboy-genre movie named *Sukiyaki Western Django*, which fused a twelfth century epic tale of rivalry between the Genji and Heike clans with the Spaghetti Western film genre. Miike summoned Jakuchū's roosters, the artist's trademark, to give the film a hybrid, funky look. After about a decade, Jakuchū's images were combined by Japanese idol girl-group NMB48—a so-called "Akiba-style" (*Akiba-kei*) idol act—in a more casual, popularized form. In their music video "Extinct Black-Haired Girl" (*Zetsumetsu kurokami shōjo*), which is said to have been inspired by "Japanese beauty," Jakuchū's rooster, peacock, and tiger, like benign gods, stand by beautiful young girls in kimonos immersed in calligraphy, the tea ceremony, archery, and aikido.

The above cases illustrate the ways in which Jakuchū has been adopted by

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2. In 1912, Sōseki had a great influence on the art world of the Taisho era with his critique of the sixth Ministry of Education and Arts Exhibition (*Bunten*), entitled Bunten *and Fine Arts* (*Bunten to geijutsu*), which began with the phrase: "Art begins and ends with self-expression." See Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku Bijutsukan and Tokyo Shinbun (2013) for discussions on Sōseki and the art of the period.

3. Nakamura Reiko closely examined the process of Jakuchū's acceptance by studying literature from the Meiji period to the early Shōwa period. See Nakamura (2003).

4. Afterwards, Kurokawa made his debut as a writer of fiction with the novel *Jakuchū's Eyes* (*Jakuchū no me*, Kodansha, 1999).

popular culture. However, in case of Jakuchū, it has been more than the simple appropriation of classical iconography; Jakuchū has been made the flag-bearer of the still very much alive Japanese art boom, which began and led the trend most vigorously. What most fully initiated the Japanese art boom—a phenomenon in which Japanese (traditional) art in a broad sense has become popular among the general public since the late 1990s (Fukuzumi n.d.)—was the unexpected success of the 2000 exhibition *Jakuchū!* at the Kyoto National Museum, which commemorated the 200th anniversary of the artist's death. During the last eighteen years, in which Jakuchū has been re-evaluated and, one might say, rehabilitated, his creations have frequently made appearances at exhibitions dealing with various kinds of subject matter. In the process, Jakuchū's name has gradually increased in value. Every exhibition has been followed by a flurry of mass media coverage, books dedicated to Jakuchū's world of art have been published, and art magazines, academic journals, and popular magazines have all published special issues on the artist. Television programs have even provided tips on how to enjoy Jakuchū's works at exhibitions.

The Japanese art boom, led by Jakuchū, is a success story of the popularization of art advanced through an interplay of exhibitions—the arena in which artworks and the public encounter one another directly—and media—both in print and on air—that have amplified and reinforced the power of those exhibitions, as well as the social phenomenon of the spread of the internet. Other important factors behind the Japanese art boom have been a cultural phenomenon that postmodern critic and curator Asada Akira has dubbed "J return," and an increase in the number of exhibitions aimed at the general public, accelerated by the Japanese government's designation of national art museums as independent administrative agencies, a program that has been ongoing since 1997.[5] The reality of Jakuchū's explosive popularity, however, cannot be attributed merely to such systematic factors. One cannot ignore the fact that the power of the artworks themselves—in other words, some fascinating aspect of the works that has enraptured viewers—must exist in Jakuchū's paintings. Those enthusiastic about the works of this unfamiliar artist, active more than 200 years ago, re-

5. There had been a controversy in academia and in various art magazines on the designation of national art museums as independent administrative agencies. Those who agreed argued that such a designation would transform an authoritative and obsolete system of art museums into a system that served citizens through providing various services, while also liberating them from annual budgeting and allowing for more flexible operations. The opposing side argued that efficiency-oriented goals would discourage national art museums' fundamental activities of acquisition, conservation, and research, and that the sole evaluation criteria of visitor attendance would make it difficult for them to plan exhibitions with a more academic focus. See "Dai 2-kai bijutsu-shigakkai" (1999).

Figure 1. Tsuji Nobuo, Cover designs for *Lineage of Eccentrics* (*Kisō no keifu*; from left, the first edition published in 1970, a new edition published in 1988, and a paperback edition published in 2004)

quired a kind of linguistic (and logical) assurance of their taste and sensibilities, or an authoritative, academic elucidation that validated the legitimacy of their taste. One of the representative discourses that has served this role of "software," academically supporting the Jakuchū boom, as well as Japanese art more broadly, has been that of art historian Tsuji Nobuo's (1932-) concept of *kisō.*

Literally meaning "eccentric ideas," *kisō* came to be used as an art historical term after it appeared in serialized articles entitled "Lineage of Eccentrics: The Avant-garde of Edo" (*Kisō no keifu: Edo no avangyarudo*) in *Art Notes* (*Bijutsu techō*), the anthology of which was published in 1970 under the same title (*Kisō no keifu, 1970,* Bijutsu Shuppansha).[6] Tsuji's work at the time of publication succeeded in attracting attention from a number of art experts, but failed to resonate with the public. After repeatedly going out of print and being reissued (1988, Perikan Sha), it was published in paperback (2004, Chikuma Shobō) following the growth in popularity of Jakuchū (figure 1). Since then, *kisō* has been regularly introduced in various Jakuchū items, such as books and videos. In the process, it has gradually reinforced its meaning, expanded externally, and emerged as a core concept in writing the popular art history of Japan. Meanwhile, the "theory of *kisō*" may be understood as the most successful case among various theories that have repeatedly tried to highlight the "special characteristics" of Japanese art since the modern era. It also demonstrates a case

6. Tsuji mentioned the way in which he heard the term "*kisō*" used in Suzuki Jūzō's essay on Utagawa Kuniyoshi, entitled "*Kisō* of Kuniyoshi" (*Kuniyoshi no kisō*).

in which theory has happily accompanied the interest of, and appeal to, the general public in actual objects and artworks, rather than being presented solely at a theoretical or conceptual level.

Rather than focusing on a case study or an art historical analysis of artists corresponding to the Japanese art boom or the lineage of eccentrics, this article examines the ways in which the theory of *kisō*, a driving force behind the phenomenon that also helped systematize it, has been advanced and administered. For this purpose, the second section will briefly introduce various aspects of artists appearing in *Lineage of Eccentrics*, describe how the notion was conceived, and explain what its earlier forms looked like. The third section will follow through a number of Tsuji's works to see how the lineage of eccentrics actually became a lineage. In other words, this section will verify how the concept of *kisō* has gradually expanded externally to be applied to more general features of Japanese art, beyond the works of Edo-era artists, through the mediating concepts of *asobi* (playfulness) and *kazari* (decorativeness). The fourth section will investigate various examples of art historical writing and exhibitions to sketch broadly the application of *kisō*, and the fifth section will introduce the phenomenon in which *kisō* and the Japanese art boom have worked with contemporary art to reinforce one another.

Kisō: The Concept

1. Artists of Eccentricity

Lineage of Eccentrics is a kind of encyclopedia of artistic biographies introducing the lives and most important works of Edo-period painters Iwasa Matabei (1578-1650), Kanō Sansetsu (1590-1651), Jakuchū, Soga Shōhaku (1730-81), Nagasawa Rosetsu (1754-99), and Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1798-1861).[7] To their contemporaries—both the general public and academics—these artists were never considered mainstream. They have little in common; the period of their artistic activity ranges from the early to late Edo period, and their artistic styles include both that of Kanō-ha, representing the taste of the ruling class, and Ukiyoe, which appealed to commoners.

The author first positions Iwasa and Kanō Sansetsu—the subjects of the first and second chapters—as pioneers of the lineage of eccentrics, and as artists who

7. Tsuji wrote on five of these artists in the serialized articles in *Art Notes*, and Rosetsu was included at the time of publication.

broke away from the previous generation. Iwasa is often described as "the progenitor of Ukiyoe," symbolism that is implied in the chapter title "Sorrowful World and Floating World: Iwasa Matabei" (*Ukiyo to ukiyo: Iwasa Matabei*). Tsuji regards Iwasa as an artist who displayed through his works the transition from a medieval "sorrowful world" (*ukiyo*) to its modern homophone "floating world" (*ukiyo*). The work central to this description is *The Tale of Yamanaka Tokiwa* (*Yamanaka Tokiwa monogatari emaki*) (figure 2), which features brutal, grotesque expressions and a hint of black humor.[8] Deviating from the established tradition of painting scrolls, which emphasizes the grace of the Heian court and noble culture, the work features the use of rich coloration executed through an ornate arrangement of those colors. In Tsuji's (2004, 15) words, the work displays "such decorativeness that it feels almost excessive, rough delineation demonstrating a degree of audacity, and vulgarity that speaks to contemporary genre paintings." For example, Iwasa repeats the same murder scene seven times to illustrate tenaciously how a dying man's skin color changes from moment to moment. The artist also depicts the body sliced in two by a sword in an absurdly peculiar and comical way. Tsuji greatly appreciates the artist's somewhat wicked taste of treating the bloody scene of murder and revenge as paranoid passion.

Kanō Sansetsu is introduced as an artist who boldly escaped from the Momoyama period's monumentality. To Tsuji, Kanō Sansetsu was the person who transferred the depiction of enormous trees in earlier wall paintings (*shōheki-ga*) that filled the space of the "ruler" (*tenkabito*) into "a mysterious and fantastical world" by painting them like "an enormous dragon which ascends to heaven, twisting and turning, soaring and descending, curving and trembling" (Tsuji 2004, 88-92) (figure 3). The artist's grotesque expression continues in figures of ghastly appearance and smiles, as can be found in his Taoist and Buddhist figure paintings and *Hanshan and Shide Painting* (*Kansan shūtoku-zu*), a work portraying Zen priests (*zensō*). To Tsuji, Iwasa, and Kanō Sansetsu were artists who closed the preceding period and opened a path for *kisō* painters active in the Kyoto area—such as Jakuchū, Shōhaku, and Rosetsu—who were to emerge about a century later. The work of these earlier artists of the lineage can be characterized in two ways: almost paranoiac darkness, and individualistic ideas. These characteristics place the lineage on a level comparable with the "bright" romanticism of Tawaraya Sōtatsu, a pioneer of the Rinpa school who is

8. This is a painting scroll (*emaki*) depicting the legend of Ushiwakamaru, a childhood name of late Heian-period warrior Minamoto no Yoshitsune. When he was about fifteen years old, Ushiwakamaru saw in a dream his mother, who was murdered by bandits. After listening to his mother pleading for revenge, Ushiwakamaru went out to kill the bandits with his superhuman power and sent his mother's spirit to heaven.

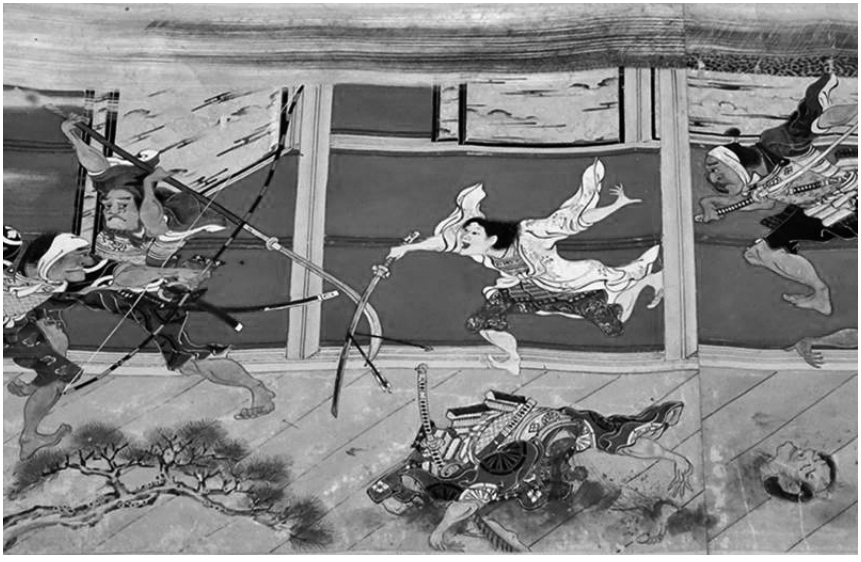

Figure 2. Iwasa Matabei, *The Tale of Yamanaka Tokiwa* (*Yamanaka Tokiwa monogatari emaki*) (part), Seventeenth century, MOA Museum of Art (top)

Figure 3. Kanō Sansetsu, *Old Plum* (*Rōumezu fusuma*), 1646, Metropolitan Museum of Art (bottom)

understood to have dominated the Kyoto art world during a similar period.

"Inner vision" is a term frequently used to describe Jakuchū, as representative of the *kisō* artists. It is well known that Jakuchū had persistently observed and depicted roosters he bred in his own yard. This, however, should be considered as separate from the inclination to sketch nature with precision and detail, and from the resulting illustrations in pictorial books—well represented by the works of Maruyama Ōkyo (1733-95)—that developed under the influence of Dutch learning (*rangaku*) and Chinese botany (*honzōgaku*). In short, Jakuchū can be understood as an artist who, while gazing into the external world through

Figure 4. Itō Jakuchū, *The Colorful Realm of Living Beings: Roosters* (*Dōshoku sai-e: gunkei-zu*), 1757-66, Imperial Household Agency, Museum of Imperial Collections (*Kunaichō Sannomarushōzōkan*) (left)

Figure 5. Itō Jakuchū, *The Colorful Realm of Living Beings: Shells* (*Dōshoku sai-e: baikō-zu*), 1757-66, Imperial Household Agency, Museum of Imperial Collections (*Kunaichō Sannomarushōzōkan*) (center)

Figure 6. Itō Jakuchū, *The Colorful Realm of Living Beings: Old Pine Trees and White Phoenix* (*Dōshoku sai-e: rōshō hakuhō-zu*), 1757-66, Imperial Household Agency, Museum of Imperial Collections (*Kunaichō Sannomarushōzōkan*) (right)

his "inner eyes," conversed with the material itself in his own way. The set of thirty scrolls that make up *The Colorful Realm of Living Beings* (*Dōshoku sai-e*), which the book presents as an example, are a series of paintings that illustrate various animals and plants with delicate brushstrokes and deeply-colored pigment. Jakuchū's rendering of eccentric ideas in the series (Tsuji 2004) is embodied by such scenes as *Insect at a Pond* (*Chihen gunchū-zu*), a "heaven of insects 'cocktailed' with humor and grotesqueness" (104), and the feathers of roosters depicted in abstract patterns in *Roosters* (*Gunkei-zu*) which display "fantastic orchestration" (105) (figure 4). Tsuji recalls Surrealism from "waves depicted like a mollusk or tentacles of amoeba" (105) in *Shells* (*Baikō-zu*) (figure 5), and describes the lotus leaves in "Lotus Pond and Fish" (*Renchi yūgyō-zu*) as being shaped like "plants from science-fiction, living in an expanding, zero-gravity space, such as underwater city or on Mars" (110). "Red, heart-shaped feathers" in *Old Pine Trees and White Phoenix* (*Rōshō hakuhō-zu*), the image appropriated in Utada Hikaru's aforementioned music video, is considered to

"trigger psychedelic hallucinations" (110) (figure 6). From the excerpts above, it is noticeable that Tsuji selects a vocabulary more accessible to contemporary readers than art historical jargon. The passage in which the author interprets the phoenix's "heart" as a reflection of "Jakuchū's reflected longing for the opposite sex," implying that the artist lived alone all his life, is a typical example of Tsuji's popular art history writing.

2. Eccentric Ideas that are Avant-garde and also Mainstream: The Pursuit of Creating a Lineage

In the afterword of the first edition of *Lineage of Eccentrics*, Tsuji explains the lineage of eccentrics as "a lineage of artists with Expressionist tendencies—artists who display eccentric and fantastical images." Moreover, he opens up the possibility of expansion by saying that "their virtuosity might differ in degree, but [that the lineage can] break the frame of conventionality and embrace every liberating and original idea" (Tsuji 2004, 214-42). Here, the phrase "break the frame of conventionality" deserves special attention. Revealing an avant-gardist characteristic that challenges established values, the phrase reminds one of the fact that the subtitle of the 1968 series was "The Avant-garde of Edo." This view, which retroactively applies a modern (or Western) view of Edo-period art, could be considered original. However, taking into account the fact that the works were more essays than academic research papers, as such, and that they were published in *Art Notes*, a monthly art magazine focused mainly on modern and contemporary art, this rhetoric was not unreasonable. As a matter of fact, Tsuji, at a roundtable that took place at the height of the Jakuchū boom in 2009, readily conceded to Yamashita Yūji's (1958-) question as to whether Tsuji concurred with the orientation of *Art Notes* at the time (Tsuji and Yamashita 2009, 56).

The characterization of a "*Art Notes*-like world" signifies not only contemporary art but simultaneously and particularly implies the avant-gardist influence that dominated the art world at the time. The fact that "LSD, Art, and Creativity: The Potential of Psychedelic Art" and a study of Hijigata Tatsumi (1928-86), well known for *Butoh*, or dance of darkness (*Ankoku Butō*), were published in the same volume as Tsuji's first article of the series allows one to speculate upon the atmosphere of the period.[9] It can be concluded that the

9. In another dialogue, Tsuji and Yamashita discussed the atmosphere of the art world at the time of the series and the publication of *Lineage of Eccentrics*; in the process, they brought in key terms such as "pop and psychedelic culture," and "anti-art." Yamashita, in particular, mentioned a "synchro" of psychedelic and eccentric ideas, discussing the similarity between the cover of *Shōnen*

specific cultural environment of the late 1960s contributed to Tsuji's frequent use of terms such as "hallucination" and "psychedelic" in describing the dream-like expressions revealed in the works of Jakuchū and other *kisō* artists.

Notably, the third chapter of *Lineage of Eccentrics*, entitled "Histoires Naturelles of Fantasy: Itō Jakuchū" (Natural Stories of Fantasy: Itō Jakuchū), began with an epigraph quoting the words of contemporary artist Sugimata Tadashi (1914-94).[10] An avant-gardist painter who was a surrealist before the war and who turned to abstraction after it, Sugimata viewed Jakuchū as an artist who "layers one by one the open forms existing freely in his inner world, forming a world that infinitely expands" (Tsuji 2004, 97). Sugimata's words were appropriate not only in underscoring the avant-gardist pursuit of constructing an original world of art that was not constrained by academia, but also in supporting the aforementioned "Jakuchū view" elucidated by Tsuji, or the inner vision and zero-gravity state of expansion.

Avant-gardism was not a phenomenon limited to the world of art and culture. The 1950s and 1960s, marked by protests against the presence of US military bases on Japanese soil and a fight over national security were an avant-garde period in a more general sense. The political and artistic avant-garde sometimes united, and sometimes broke apart amid subtle differences. Tsuji, who went through the period as a young art historian, delivers the atmosphere of the times through his own experience in his 2014 autobiography, *Discovery of Eccentrics* (*Kisō no hakken*). Reminiscing about how he began his undergraduate thesis at Tokyo University with a sentence that was based on a "lame, Marxist view of history," and how he personally participated in the Sunagawa Struggle in 1957, he also empathized with student protester Kanba Michiko's death in 1960. Recollecting how "the Yasuda hall, thought to be ungainly and dull, looked 'enervated' during the time of the Tokyo University blockade," Tsuji adds that he donated all the money he received for *Lineage of Eccentrics*, newly published at the time, to those injured during the protest (Tsuji 2014c, 71-92).

The term avant-garde, by nature, presumes the existence of a majority—an object to be demolished and overcome—and comes into existence at the antipode of that majority. Avant-garde's popular images of rebellious minorities or outsiders originate from this. Yet Tsuji does not struggle to underline these characteristics, but explains how it was never his original intention to "emphasize only the unique features" of the six artists, "viewing them as a heretical minority

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magajin, of which Yokoo Tadanori was in charge, and painter of *kisō* Shōhaku. (Tsuji and Yamashita 2003, 166-74).

10. The epigraph quotes an essay Sugimata wrote for *Art Notes* (March, 1957) after seeing Jakuchū's *Cactus and Roosters* (*Saboten gunkei-zu*) in an exhibition celebrating the year of rooster.

belonging to a collateral line or a sub-current" (Tsuji 2004, 214-42).[11] As the series was reorganized into a book, the subtitle "The Avant-garde of Edo" disappeared, and the focus moved to the lineage. Consequently, the artists of *kisō* acquired the somewhat contradictory characteristics of an "avant-garde inside the mainstream" (or an avant-garde that, as mainstream, was newly bound to create a lineage).

What is interesting in this is the way in which Tsuji appears as though he himself, as an emerging art historian, has attempted to take on the role of overthrowing conventionality, rather than leaving it to the artists. There are sections in the book in which Tsuji challenges earlier academic discussions of art history. A representative example is a chapter focusing on Iwasa, in which Tsuji introduces a dispute between the outliers of art history and the academic world. Tsuji discusses a conflict between relatively lesser-known art historian Haruyama Takematsu—who approved unusual works of painted scrolls (*emaki*) including *The Tale of Yamanaka Tokiwa* as original works by Iwasa and appraised these works as the progenitors of Ukiyoe—and Fujikage Shizuya—a University of Tokyo professor and an expert on Ukiyoe who disagreed with Haruyama's views. The chapter reveals Tsuji's endorsement of Haruyama's arguments (Tsuji 2004, 48-61).

At the time, the *Asahi Newspaper* (*Asahi shinbun)* printed a review of *Lineage of Eccentrics* headlined "A Challenge to Orthodox Art History," the title of which reflected not only the book's friendlier, pro-audience written style but also the fact that it raised questions about received art historic views. Tsuji, who had explained in the afterword of the first edition how he had been motivated to "liberate [the history of Edo paintings] from banal and lethargic formation" (Tsuji 2004, 242), wrote in the afterword of the new edition in 1981, in a stronger tone, how the book had been written with "the wicked motive of adding a bit of a thrill to the safely sterilized history of Edo paintings" (Tsuji 2004, 245). This suggests Tsuji's increased confidence in the direction of research as it had developed. What was, then, an alternative to overturn "banal, lethargic, and safely sterilized" descriptions of established art history?[12]

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11. In 1963, before writing *Lineage of Eccentrics*, Tsuji had used the expression "heretical painters" when discussing Jakuchū and Shōhaku in the *Kadokawa Encyclopedia of World Art* volume on Edo art. Later, however, Tsuji mentioned that reconsidering the phrase at this point, it had some errors, and revised his opinion (Tsuji and Yamashita 2009, 56).

12. What Tsuji describes as a view of Edo-period paintings based on artistic schools is a way of distinguishing artistic groups in a composition of competition. According to this standpoint, as the mainstream schools of Kanō and Tosa, which had corresponded with the art of the ruling class from the preceding period, became nominal, a variety of outliers such as Rinpa, Ukiyoe, literati paintings, Maruyama Shijō School (*Maruyama Shijō-ha*), and Western-style paintings competed

An article that embodied such an intention was "Painters of Artistry: An Artistic School that is Not a School" (*Kikyō no gaka: ryūha nara zaru ryūha*) (Tsuji 2014b), published after the abovementioned book. Substituting the term "artistry" (*kikyō*) in the title with the word *kisō* would not make much difference, and thus one can say that the key point lay in its subtitle. In this essay, Tsuji discloses his desire to "create a lineage" by saying that he tries to think outside the frame of artistic schools set out in previous research, and "if an interesting similarity can be found between artists and artworks that had been considered unrelated or oppositional, relate them under a new lineage." As can be seen here, the evidence for the project of a new reading of Japanese art history, which began in earnest after the mid-1980s, can be seen much earlier, at the moment when its cue, the concept of eccentric ideas, was created.

3. Eccentric Ideas that are Universal and Specific: An Emphasis on Expressiveness and Popular Appeal

If the concept of eccentricity (or artistry) acted as a master key to constructing "an artistic school that is not a school," the methodology selected as appropriate was a new reading of works "based on [their] actual contents according to the criteria of contemporary aesthetics or values" (Tsuji 2014b, 4). In this way, "Painters of Artistry" reorganized the characteristics of *kisō* that had inevitably been mentioned only sporadically due to the earlier book's format as a collected biography. The essay also introduced contemporary cases that could be explained in terms of a similar category of eccentricity, or values of the time that had influenced the notion of *kisō*.

In the previous section, the avant-gardist atmosphere was described as the soil in which the idea of *kisō* could take root. However, the situation in which attention to "bizarreness"—as an aesthetic element adopted in art history research trends or the cultural mores of the time—increased was also significant. As Tsuji recalled in his autobiography, a year before his serial work came the publication of *Fantastics and Eccentrics in Chinese Painting*, by James Cahill (1967), an art historian with expertise in Chinese art, and a special exhibition in New York (Asia House Gallery, New York City, Mar. 23-May 28, 1967) that opened under the same title as the book. The book and the exhibition both had a great influence on Tsuji's conception of *kisō*. Among the many painters in Chinese art history, Cahill had focused particularly on what were described as the Expressionist and individualistic artists of the late Zhe School (*Zhèpài*)—of

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with one another.

the Wild and Heterodox School (*Kuángtàixiéxuépài*), the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou (*Yángzhōubāguài*), the Shitao (*Shítāo*), and the Bada Shanren (*Bādàshānrén*, literally the Mountain Man of Eight Greats)—who were active mostly during the rule of the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Maniérisme and Surrealism are representative examples of styles in Western art that display eccentricity beyond an ordinary level. As stated earlier, "surreal(istic)" images are frequently cited in *Lineage of Eccentrics* in describing the overall ambience of a work. In this book, however, what appeared to be most direct comparison with *kisō* was Maniérisme. At the time of the book's publication, there was increased interest in reevaluating this artistic style, with the publication of a translated version of Arnold Hauser's *Mannerism: The Crisis of Renaissance and the Origin of Modern Art* (1964). Tsuji also quotes Hauser when viewing Maniérisme as "a budding sprout of anti-naturalism that deviates from nature and aims for sophisticated and artificial forms; anti-classicism that seeks to boldly deconstruct the completed classical forms and contents; and modern consciousness of self that senses and agitates over being isolated from civilization." He moreover identifies the trend of reinstating and re-evaluating Maniérisme as having kept pace with contemporary aesthetics such as Expressionism, Surrealism, and abstract art.

A desire to deviate from the ordinary, or an expressionist tendency, has been understood as one axis of humans' formative consciousness. Therefore, an attempt to connect *kisō* to Surrealism or Maniérisme played a role in guaranteeing the universality of the concept. After affirming the concept's formal universality and legitimacy, Tsuji continues his discussion to describe the distinctive features of the Edo-era painters of *kisō*. What he focuses on at this point is "an appeal to ordinary people" (*minshū*). Tsuji points out the way in which European Maniérisme displayed a strong sense of metaphysical elements, even though it emerged in the Renaissance period, born of an antagonism to Classicism. Set against this, Tsuji sees the Maniérisme-like characteristics that suffuse the eccentric and bizarre ideas of the Edo era as displaying the tastes of the people: sensual, physical, and even vulgar (Tsuji 2014b, 6-7).

Some of the important weapons purportedly adopted by *kisō* painters to pull the classical and traditional down to the popular level were wit, humor, mockery, and cynicism. Thanks to the use of these weapons, the shape of the previously mentioned magnificent trees of Momoyama art becomes oddly twisted (Kanō Sansetsu's *Old Plum*), and Heian painting scrolls' neat forms morph into something with a slimy, wicked appearance (Iwasa's *emaki*). Attributes of popularity extracted in the process operated as a crucial agency linking this argument to elements to be added later to reinforce concepts such as

parody (*mitate*), amateurism, and *asobi*.

The interest in, and emphasis on, ordinary people could be understood to reflect the social climate of the time—in short, the postwar aspiration of democracy that lingered to a certain degree until the 1960s, when the concept of *kisō* was formulated. Furthermore, an attitude that valued naïve popular appeal over elitist expertise was in line with a straightforward and popular reading of art history that Tsuji had adhered to since the time he suggested the concept of *kisō*. Thus, this attitude could be connected to the core driving force of the Japanese art boom after the 1990s.

Expansion of the Concept of *Kisō*: *Asobi* and *Kazari*

Tsuji's work best known to Korean readers is not *Lineage of Eccentrics*, but *The Guide to Understanding Japanese Art* (*Ilbon misul ihae ŭi kiljabi*, Yi Wŏn-hye trans., Sigongsa) published in 1994. This book, the original Japanese title of which is *Nihon bijutsu no mikata* (Iwanamishoten, 1992), is the last volume in a series consisting of seven books that each deal with a single century in Japanese art history. Like other volumes in the series, the book does not employ a syntactical description, but summarizes an overall flow of Japanese art using two keywords: *kazari* and *asobi*. Because of this subjective criterion, the book is probably not appropriate for foreign readers looking for an introduction to Japanese art. In Korea, however, because references to Japanese art were scarce, the book acted as an introductory guide to it, not only for researchers but also for the general public.

What should be noted is that the two keywords the book suggests as a lens through which to view Japanese art are *kazari* and *asobi*, and not *kisō*, a concept considered Tsuji's trademark.[13] One way to understand this is to realize that because the book aimed to survey the overall history of Japanese art, the idea of *kisō*, conceived to describe mainly Edo-period painters, was not appropriate for the purpose. This, however, was not the case. The same conceptual frame that was used to suggest the idea of *kisō* is applied to explain *kazari* and *asobi* in the book. Moreover, as described above, the concept of *kisō* had already functioned

13. As the book was bound to describe the entire period that composed the history of Japanese art, it had to include more than just works displaying features of *kazari* and *asobi*. It therefore included "The Aesthetics of Not Decorating" next to the third chapter, "The Pleasure of Decorating," and introduced so-called "anti-decoration culture"—The Way of Tea aesthetics represented by Sen no Rikyū, the blank space of ink paintings by painters such as Hasegawa Tōhaku, and dry landscape gardens (*karesansui*).

as a seed to create a lineage that intended to look at Japanese art in a new way. Therefore, it is possible to say that the concept was actually hiding, undercover, around other derived concepts. After going through this period of expansion, the Japanese art boom, headed by Jakuchū emerged, and the concept of *kisō* came to the surface once again.

Respectively denoting the pleasures of decorativeness and playfulness, *kazari* and *asobi* were introduced through *Illustrations of Eccentrics* (*Kisō no zufu*, Heibonsha), published in 1989 as a sister edition to *Lineage of Eccentrics*.[14] This new book widened its range of descriptions by including discussions on Hokusai—about whom Tsuji had expressed regret for not having been able to spare much space for in his previous work—and the identity of mysterious Ukiyoe artist Tōshusai Sharaku. Amidst it all, however, one should pay attention to how Tsuji sought to expand the concept by using the word *kisō* in the title. In the postscript, for instance, Tsuji argues that "the wild and energetic spirit of '*asobi*' and the function of '*kazari*' which transforms the secular world into a golden heaven" are the characteristics of Japanese art, and that "it has been '*kisō*' that served the mysterious role of a director who entertains the viewers, hand in hand with these two features" (Tsuji 2005, 296). In Tsuji's argument, then, what would the link between *asobi, kisō,* and *kazari* have been?

1. *Kisō* and *Asobi*

Illustrations of Eccentrics consists of three parts: "Unrestricted (*Jizai*) Taste," "The Creativity of Amateurism," and "The Eccentricity of Decorativeness." Overall, the book focuses on unrestricted expression, which is the main feature of *kisō*, but, as will be further explained, amateurism and *kazari* are added as new features. First of all, when Tsuji explains the aspects of amateurism through Jakuchū, he points out how the artist's liberating expression was possible—developing his own style through self-study. Through this comment, Tsuji links the two terms of free expression and amateurism. Newly introduced and more important cases that exemplify these attributes are works by Zen priests such as those of Hakuin (1686-1769) and Sengai. Their Zen paintings (*zenga*), which have the appearance of children's doodles, are highly praised for their naïve,

14. *Illustrations of Eccentrics* was based on writings published in magazine *Monthly Encyclopedia* (*Gekkan hyakka*) from 1986-87, with the addition of other works such as artist studies that had been published in art magazines and volumes of Japanese art collection, as well as a long theory of decorativeness entitled "*Kazari no Kisō*," which had been included in a catalogue for *Beauty of Japan: The World of Decoration* (*Nihon no Bi: kazari no sekai*, NHK Service Center, 1986), an exhibition of Tsuji's curation.

Figure 7. Sengai, *Frog in Zen Meditation* (*Zazen wa gasan*), Late Edo period, Idemitsu Museum of Art

humble qualities, achieved through an abandonment of technique. The fact that Zen priest painters preached with joy, using comical paintings, could be explained in terms of people-oriented optimism and humor. Brilliant ideas that stimulate the viewer's curiosity and which lead to laughs can converge in the mind in pursuit of fun, which is nothing other than the spirit of *asobi* (figure 7).

In the afterword of the latest edition of *Lineage of Eccentric*s, published a year before *Illustrations of Eccentrics*, is a description that appears to lay the groundwork for the expansion of the concept of *kisō*. In it, Tsuji argues that *kisō* has the duality of yin and yang, and through this classification he seeks externally to extend the concept. If the "*kisō* of yin," frequently dealt with in previous writings, is generated from a conflict between reality (society) and the artist's self-consciousness, like grotesque bizarreness or gory scenes of brutality that work alongside Maniérisme, the newly added "*kisō* of yang" is set up as "humor and wit displayed through brilliant taste and parody (*mitate*) produced as an entertainment for the audience." This "bright *kisō*" is related to amusement and play, while going further back to the medieval period rather than being bound to the modern era (the Edo period), in pursuit of the expansion of its temporal horizons.

Since the late 1970s, Tsuji has paid attention to the aesthetics of *oko* (ridiculousness and absurdity) that describes *sarugaku* (literally, monkey music), indicating comical song, dance, and other forms of entertainment, as well as derived *oko-e* (comical, satirical paintings) (Tsuji 1977).[15] Thus, he deems figures

15. This essay was included with "Painter of Artistry: An Artistic School That is Not a School" in *Nihon bijutsu no hyōjō* (Tsuji 1986) that focused on caricature as a feature of Japanese art. This book can be positioned between two "*kisō* series" of *Keifu* and *Zufu*, and it is where the core concepts in Tsuji's description of Japanese art history come into view. The book was followed by

Figure 8. *Hell of the Iron Mortar* (*Tetsugaisho*) from *Hell Scrolls* (*Jigoku zōji*), Heian to Kamakura periods (twelfth century), Nara National Museum

sketched using a doodle-like *hakubyō* technique (a drawing method using only lines without any color) in the twelfth century work *Legends of Shigisan Temple* (*Shigisan engi emaki*) a caricature of humorous gestures performing *sarugaku*. He also finds an example in comical and jocular scenes of commoners making appearances among solemn processions depicted in *Painting Scroll of Yearly Events* (*Nenjū gyōji emaki*), a work originally painted as a record. Even in describing *Hell Scrolls* (*Jigokuzōji*), a Buddhist painting depicting scenes of hell produced to serve a function of admonishment, Tsuji focuses on the comical exaggeration in grave and cruel scenes used to depict evil spirits and monsters that is executed to such a degree that they even look adorable (figure 8).

In relation to this, Tsuji borrows views from the fields of Japanese literature and folklore. For example, he cites the way in which Okazaki Yoshie understands *okashi*, an adjective form of *oko*, to have a contrasting connotation to that of *aware*, a Japanese term signifying an exclamation of heavy, serious, and lonesome sentiment. This is a view that sees *okashi* and *oko* as a mind willing to deal with things and objects with a lighter attitude while concurrently bearing a critical aspect accompanied by carefreeness, joking, and mockery. Yanagita Kunio, who underscored *oko* in a more positive way, is also summoned into the discussion. According to him, *oko* is "a performing technique that can only be executed by those of keen sensitivity, and a tradition that entertains people

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Nihon bijutsu no mikata.

which can only be acquired through training one's imagination." Yanagita's regretful position regarding the way that *oko* tradition has deteriorated and become almost forgotten since the modern period communicates with Tsuji's intention to revive in the contemporary period the painters of *kisō* who had been isolated with the introduction and institutionalization of the concept of art in the modern era.

2. *Kisō* and *Kazari*

The same diagram including both universality and specificity that was used to extract the concept of *kisō* also applies to *kazari*. Therefore, the "spirit and action of decorating" is first mentioned as an autonomous activity of consciousness and culture of human beings,[16] and it is followed by an investigation of how and through which characteristics it is revealed in Japan. Decorativeness is an element that has long been discussed as one of the features of Japanese art. Craftwork, a driving force behind Japonism and the Rinpa school's fancy screens, have received much attention from art historians. Tsuji, however, intentionally chose the more inclusive and general term *kazari* in place of "decorative art." If one limits discussion to decorative art, or "the history of crafts," a categorization based on material and metal craftsmanship, such as metalcraft, lacquerware, textiles, and ceramics, is inevitable. Meanwhile, the discussion would focus on preserving something permanently (as cultural heritage). Tsuji, however, argues about how, in Japan, the spirit of *kazari* existed not only in these kinds of elaborations in crafts but—even without the premise of leaving something behind—also in everyday life.

One of the pieces of evidence he provides is *tsukurimono* (roughly, man-made products), a term that includes stage settings or props, miniatures, and costumes produced for Kabuki, Noh, and various kinds of rituals. *Tsukurimono* is not cultural heritage made to be preserved, but it is filled with a will to decorate. For example, according to Tsuji, *dashi*, an ornamental wagon used during festivals (*matsuri*), has "mysterious energy that instantly transforms an 'ordinary daily life' to 'something extraordinary,'" and thus can be linked with the concept of *kisō*. Furthermore, this kind of view could be connected to an

16. This kind of attitude applies to both *asobi* and *kazari*. For instance, Tsuji quoted a phrase from Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* which reads: "Culture arises in the form of play, that it is played from the very beginning." Tsuji substitutes the word "play" with "*kazari*," arguing that because the act of decorating is deeply rooted in human nature and is a fundamental element that forms culture, *kazari* and *asobi* are thus closely related to one another (Tsuji 2005, 233-34).

attitude questioning Western art's hierarchy,[17] adopted in the modern era, which sees decoration as only a subordinate element that can never exist autonomously.

If *oko* was an aesthetic supporting *asobi*, the concept of *fūryū* (elegant and refined taste for the arts and nature) was a proposed matrix for *kazari*. Originally a Chinese concept, *fūryū* in general denotes literati who have retreated to nature, or the lifestyle of a hermit; in Tsuji's view, however, Japanese *fūryū* connotes a more enthusiastic, optimistic character, with abundant showmanship. This view is similar to the one applied to distinguish Maniérisme-like character in the West, and Tsuji argues that such an enthusiastic aspect leads to "decorating *fūryū*." This *fūryū* is then subdivided into excessive and "undeserving (*kasa*) *fūryū*," "extravagant (*basara*) *fūryū*," which involves splendid, brilliant moments that fill the eyes with wonder, and "*fūryū* of two evil places" (*akusho*; *kabuki* and red-light districts), manifested in public desires that developed a consumer economy during the Edo period, which saw luxury as an evil and encouraged frugality (Tsuji 2005, 249-68).

In this respect, *fūryū* and *kazari* are contrasted with elegant, poised, and solitary sentiment that have been discussed as "Japanese beauty." This contrast is suggested in a conflicting relationship of "extravagance (*basara*) versus elegance (*miyabi*)." While summarizing the discussion on *fūryū,* Tsuji does not forget to mention even the elegant, solemn, and lonesome sentiment that had been characterized as Japanese beauty—represented by the words elegance (*miyabi*), subtle and profound grace (*yūgen*), or refined and simple grace (*fūga*)—within the categorization of *fūryū*. As he proposes "the aesthetics of not decorating" in contrast with "the beauty of decorating" in *Nihon bijutsu no mikata*, or distinguishes the *kisō* of yin from the *kisō* of yang, Tsuji points to *fūryū*'s duality. From the perspective of *kazari,* the highbrow *fūryū* of yin joins with "*fūryū* that eschews *kazari*," in other words, *wabi* and *sabi*. In the end, instead of pursuing academic "systemicity" and rigidity, Tsuji arranges a kind of safety net not by excluding opposing concepts but rather by embracing and relativizing the two contrasting characteristics.

17. Fine art > decorative art = applied art

The Application of *Kisō*: *Kisō* in the Phenomenon of the Japanese Art Boom

1. Easily Comprehensible Art History

With the concept of *kisō* and the features of Japanese art expanded in mind, let us return to the Japanese art boom after the 2000s. As explained above, the retrospective exhibition *Jakuchū!*, held in 2000, and the publication of *Lineage of Eccentrics* in paperback, had such a powerful impact that it is not an exaggeration to say that Japanese art history was rewritten from "art history without Jakuchū to one with Jakuchū" (Koganezawa 2016, 103). *Japanese Art History in Colors* (*Karā-ban Nihon bijutsu shi*, Bijutsu Shuppansha; the first edition printed in 1991, revised edition printed in 2003), on which Tsuji worked as a supervising editor, is a steady seller that is regarded by readers as a textbook of Japanese art history. In this book, art from the mid- and late Edo period is still categorized under the established frames of the Kanō school, literati painting, *shaseiga* (sketches from nature), and Ukiyoe. Moreover, Jakuchū as well as Rosetsu and Shōhaku—forming a so-called "trio of *kisō*"—are mentioned in the book merely as individual artists belonging to the *shaseiga* group, discussion of which was focused on Ōkyo.

A relatively recent example is *Edo Period III,* the fourteenth volume of the twenty-volume series *Compendium of Japanese Art* (*Nihon bijutsu zenshū* 2012-16), published to commemorate the ninetieth anniversary of the founding of the Shogakukan publishing company. This volume is entitled *The Kisō of Jakuchū, Ōkyo, and Miyako* (*Jakuchū·Ōkyo·Miyako no Kisō*). Ōkyo, who in previous studies had been discussed as an orthodox painter representing the Kyoto school of painters during the Edo period, here abdicates to Jakuchū. Meanwhile, *kisō* garners a higher status to become a headword that summarizes the overall art of Kyoto (*Miyako*). Compared to the description based on a complex and ambiguous distinction by artistic schools or genres—the Kanō school, the Tosa school, the Sumiyoshi school, *Yamato-e*, and literati paintings—Tsuji's work may be presented to the public in a more friendly manner by adopting easier terms, including *kisō*, as well as expression, freedom, *asobi,* and *kazari*. This new kind of art history writing widened its range of interest from elucidating not only the artworks, but also the unique biographies of painters who were purportedly eccentric.

Yet in the midst of the Japanese art boom an interesting debate occurred that demonstrated an expansion of the *kisō* concept, while simultaneously revealing different views of academia and those oriented toward a more popular history of art. It was a debate on the authenticity of *Birds, Animals, and Flowering Plants*

in an Imaginary Scene (*Chōjū kaboku-zu*), a work from a collection of American collector Joe D. Price (1926-) and his wife, Etsuko Price, who recognized from earlier on the charm of Edo-period painters, and especially Jakuchū, even when those painters received little attention domestically. The work is one rendered using a method unique to Jakuchū known as *masumegaki* (grid painting). To execute this technique, one has to divide a screen into small, grid-like cells and fill each one individually with similar colors of different tones to create a mosaic-like effect. Among the works rendered using this technique, *White Elephant and Animals* (*Hakuzō gunju-zu*), with the artist's seal, is recognized as Jakuchū's original work. However, there is a controversy surrounding the two works, which are almost identical in their composition and subject matter. These are "Animals in the Flower Garden" (*Juka chōjū-zu byōbu*, collection of the Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art, henceforth "Shizuoka edition") and *Birds, Animals, and Flowering Plants in an Imaginary Scene* (*Chōjū kaboku-zu byōbu*, Price collection, henceforth "Price edition"). Tsuji and Satō Yasuhiro (1955-), a University of Tokyo professor, each provided different views on these works (figure 9).[18]

Satō argued that the Price edition lacked the tension common in Jakuchū's brushstrokes used to depict animals, and that *masumegaki* was applied only in rendering abstract patterns, thus concluding that the work was a shameful copy (Satō 2006, 58-59). According to Satō, if one considers "White Elephant and Animals" as a standard example, the artist should have drawn in another small square on the top of each grid more clearly and systematically; the Price edition, however, fails to display such delicacy. Moreover, the artist colored the entire picture plane in a strong tone, producing an unnatural image.

Tsuji set forth a counter-argument contending that the work was, rather, a more experimental and advanced form. He explained that the artist had divided each grid with more than two squares or with three to four colors, and in individual grid squares had directly painted not only small squares but also a variety of designs (figure 10). Tsuji thus saw the abstract ornamental patterns criticized by Satō as a display of one of Jakuchū's strengths—flexibility to move back and forth freely between painting and design; in other words, an embodiment of the "*kisō* of *kazari*." Furthermore, Tsuji discovered in this *masumegaki* technique a spirit of *asobi* similar to that which can be felt when playing with a jigsaw puzzle. And although Satō criticized the imbalance and supposed clumsiness in the depictions of the animals, Tsuji interpreted the same feature as an attempt by Jakuchū—an artist who paid more attention to geometric forms

18. A "paper war" surrounding the works of Jakuchū progressed in the following order: Satō (2010); Tsuji (2014); Satō (2015).

Figure 9. Itō Jakuchū, *Animals in the Flower Garden* (*Juka chōjū-zu byōbu*), Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art (top); *Birds, Animals, and Flowering Plants in an Imaginary Scene* (*Chōjū kaboku-zu byōbu*), Price Collection (bottom)

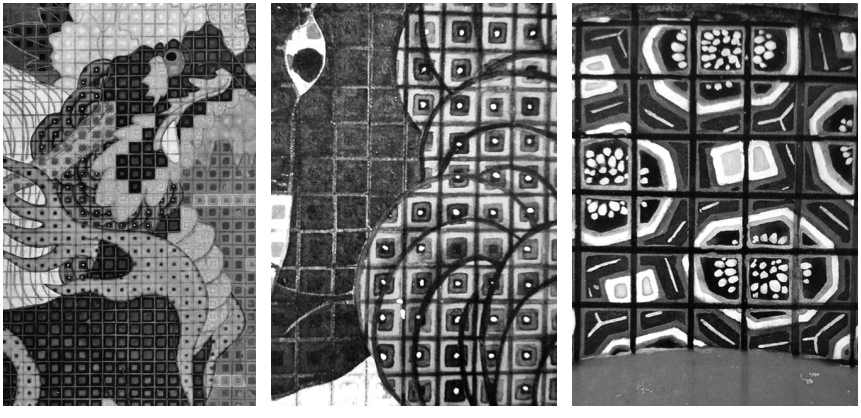

Figure 10. Details of the screen displaying the *masumegaki* technique, from *Birds, Animals, and Flowering Plants in an Imaginary Scene* (*Chōjū kaboku-zu byōbu*)

and *déformer* (transformation and exaggeration) than to natural depictions—to "design" a jigsaw puzzle-like picture plane by distributing coloration and adjusting forms. Tsuji's overall plan, connecting and expanding from eccentric ideas to *asobi* and *kazari*, acquired appropriate evidence for its legitimacy through this debate.

Another point to be highlighted is the attitude of Yamashita, Tsuji's faithful disciple and a rigorous promoter of the Japanese art boom. Yamashita expressed strong opposition to Satō's view that Jakuchū had been in charge only of the underdrawing of the Shizuoka edition, and that the Price edition was merely a copy made by a different individual. In a conversation between Tsuji and Yamashita, even Tsuji said it was not possible for an artist to paint 86,000 grid expressions in full-color on a six-layer folding screen by himself, and thus suggested that it was better to understand the work as a product of the "Jakuchū workshop," or "Jakuchū design 'supervised' by Jakuchū." Despite his teacher's opinion, Yamashita responded: "No, if it's Jakuchū, it is possible." (Tsuji and Yamashita 2009, 65-70). Furthermore, Yamashita criticized an apparent obsession over the authorship issue as "a bad habit of art historians," and denounced Satō's argument as an extreme case demonstrating an attitude concerning the degree to which one should approve the piece as Jakuchū's authentic work. Although Yamashita began his career as an academic undertaking art historical research, he moved in a different direction to become regarded as a promoter of Japanese art, and—as can be seen from the above instance—he shifted his attitude even to take a critical stance on an appraisal of authenticity, the quintessence of art historical research.

This shift in attitude results from repulsion toward Jakuchū's works—"the pride of Japanese art"—being considered fakes or copies. It was quite a natural response to be expected from Yamashita, who often displayed a blanket admiration for Japanese art. Yamashita's attitude overlapped somewhat with that of Tsuji's in the past, in that he showed a kind of resistance against the tenets of art history research and its authority. In the aforementioned conversation, Tsuji speaks for Yamashita's opinion, explaining how "someone with good eyes like Price saying, out of his instinct, 'this work is Jakuchū!' is not so wrong, but it is nonsensical for an academic to respond to such an opinion and lead the discussion to dualism of whether it is an original or a fake." This comment reveals Tsuji's sustained antipathy toward authority, as well as his pursuit of a publicly-inclined, easily comprehensible writing of art history.[19]

19. The argument over the authenticity of Jakuchū's work revealed in manifold ways the relationship between the collector and the art world. In other words, in the background of the conflict lay a long peer relationship between Tsuji and Price, and the sharp tension between the

This kind of pro-audience art history writing, or motivation for popularizing Japanese art, is realized most visually in the form of exhibitions. An organizer of the 2000 exhibition *Jakuchū!* at the Kyoto National Museum, which has often been recalled as the prelude to the Jakuchū boom, Kano Hiroyuki (1947-) recollects huge enthusiasm for the exhibition—how young people crowded in front of exhibition posters placed in railway stations, and how one of each 2.88 visitors purchased an exhibition catalogue—and scathingly remarked:

> Jakuchū was what was interesting. Descriptions and commentaries provided in any exhibition were not fun at all due to a lack of art historians' capability. Sentences painfully squeezed out of *academic knowledge* (emphasis in original) that was only of a 'shark brain' were not what the purchasers of catalogues aspired to, but no one realizes this fact … Jakuchū's works are fun. If one cannot express that joy in words, it is better not to say anything at all. When will one realize that it is us researchers that make art history something minor? (2009, 99)

This comment reveals concerns on the art scene that sensed the limitations of the academy's authority as well as its rigid academic attitude. The words could come from this current Doshisha University professor, as he, for most of his career, had worked not in the academic art field but at art museums. One can also take into account the external pressures of the time, as his comment was made a year before the program of designating national museums as independent administrative agencies began. In the next section, I would like to introduce a number of cases illustrating the ways in which *Lineage of Eccentrics* and the Japanese art boom were embodied through exhibitions curated in the 2000s.

2. "Fun" Exhibitions

In 2003, the inaugural exhibition at the Mori Art Museum—a venue that commanded attention as the world's highest museum, located on the fifty-third floor of Mori Building in Tokyo's Roppongi Hills district, a development that was completed after about seventeen years of work—took place. The exhibition, *Happiness: A Survival Guide for Art and Life* (*Hapines: āto ni miru kōfuku e no*

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collector's influence and the art world became known. In fact, after the controversy, there was also a heated discussion between Satō and Price, despite their thirty years of friendship, and the Price family did not give permission for Satō's *Motto shiritai Itō Jakuchū* (2006) to use images of artworks from their collection There was also an incident in which among a number of Jakuchū-related books displayed at a museum shop for *The 300th Anniversary of His Birth: Jakuchū* (2016)—in which the Price edition was exhibited—only Satō's books were excluded.

kagi), featured 250 works by 180 artists from the past and present day East and West, and was organized around the theme of joy. The subtitle of the exhibition in Japanese included a list of highlighted artists, proudly including Jakuchū's name, alongside those of Monet and Jeff Koons, as a "representative artist of Japan." Yamashita, who had selected ancient artworks for the exhibition, praised artists such as Jakuchū, Shōhaku, and Sengai highly as "the happy beings in the history of Japanese art" in his essay for the exhibition catalogue, while dedicating much of his writing to describing Tsuji's *Lineage of Eccentrics* and the concept of *asobi* (Yamashita 2003).

As may be understood from this, the lineage of eccentrics, when linked with the Japanese art boom, accentuated its bright, vivacious, cute, and pleasurable aspects, rather than the bizarre, dark, and grotesque "*kisō* of yin," which resulted in a stronger appeal to the public. For example, in exhibitions *The Smile in Japanese Art: From the Jōmon Period to the Early Twentieth Century, Jakuchū, Hakuin, Enkū, Ryūsei* (*Nihon bijutsu ga warau*: *Jōmon kara 20-seiki shotō made, Jakuchū, Hakuin, Enkū, and Ryūsei*) held at the Mori Art Museum in 2007, and *Cute Japanese Art: Jakuchū, Seihō, Shōen to Kumakai Morikazu* (*Kawaii Nihon bijutsu: Jakuchū·Seihō·Shōen kara Kumagai Morikazu made*) held at the Yamatane Museum of Art in 2014, artists such as Jakuchū, Hakuin, and Enku, who had been discussed by Tsuji as painters with popular appeal, humor, and easiness, emerged as featured artists, and their names appeared in the exhibition titles (figure 11).

In 2013, the year after the enormous inflection point of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, a returning exhibition of works from the Price collection was held. Entitled *Jakuchū Came for Us: Beauty and the Life of Edo* (*Jakuchū ga kite kuremashi ta: Puraisu Korekushon Edo kaiga no bi to seimei*), the exhibition toured Fukushima, Sendai, and Iwate. The idea for the exhibition came from Etsuko Price, who herself was from the Tochiki region and was thus shocked by news of the earthquake. In order to support the recovery of the devastated area and convey fellow-feeling to its people, the couple sent a large number of lively works by Jakuchū, Rosetsu, and Shōhaku—artists representing *kisō*—alongside works by representative artists of the Edo Rinpa school, including Sakai Hoitsu and Suzuki Kiitsu. The emphasis of the exhibition was on targeting a younger audience than adults, and therefore the artworks were displayed not according to categorizations by artist or time period but in sections titled using intuitive, familiar terms such as "Eyes Talk," "Numbers Talk," "○ and △," "Price Zoo," and "I Love Beauty." The wall texts for each artwork were also adjusted as well; the more descriptive title of *Tiger Growling at the Moon* (*Tsuki ni hoeru tora*) was brought to the fore while the original title *Tiger* (*Tora-zu byōbu*) was printed in

Figure 11. Posters of exhibitions related to Jakuchū: *Cute Japanese Art* (*Kawaii Nihon bijutsu*) and *Jakuchū's Happiness and Taikan's Auspiciousness* (*Yukaina Jakuchū, medetai Taikan*), Yamatane Museum of Art

superscript. In case of Jakuchū's *Hydrangeas and Pair of Chickens* (*Ajisai Sōkei-zu)*, the title *Hydrangea and Two Roosters* (*Ajisai no hana to ni wa no niwatori*) dominated the wall text.

A variety of exhibitions did not always include artists from Tsuji's lineage of eccentrics, but still kept a focus on the concept. In 2012, the Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts subtitled a Hokusai exhibition *Landscapes, Beauty, and Eccentrics* (*fūkei·bijin·kisō*). This exhibition added to the two main themes of Ukiyoe—landscapes and figures (beauty)—the theme of *kisō*, which is quite different in its hierarchical and categorical position, to form a tripartite concept. The "Eccentrics" section included artworks such as paintings of monsters, depicting scenes from the *hyaku monogatari* (one hundred weird and strange stories) style of ghost tales, drawings for a game of dice (*sugoroku*) such as caricatures (*giga*), and drawings on the theme of various beasts (*chōjū*) and warriors. It was a collection of iconographies that, without consideration of the works' themes or genres, offered viewers smiles and pleasure, as well as some thrills. A bolder attempt was made by the 2017 exhibition *Belgium's Lineage of Eccentrics* (*Berugī: kisō no keifu*), which gained much attention while touring Tokyo, Hyōgo, and Utsunomiya. This exhibition grouped works by artists from Belgium under the concept of *kisō*, and even appropriated the term in its title. The English title of

the exhibition, *Fantastic Art in Belgium*, and its subtitle, "from Bosch and Magritte to Jan Fabre" implies that the exhibition presented fifteenth and sixteenth century Flanders paintings with fantastical characteristics (Bosch), works of Surrealism that claimed liberation from consciousness (Magritte), and individual works by contemporary artists (Fabre). In short, the exhibition surveyed the works of 500 years of Belgian art history using the concept of *kisō*.

From February 2019, a two-month-long exhibition was held at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum entitled *Lineage of Eccentrics: The Miraculous World of Edo Painting*. The museum's description of the exhibition as "the definitive examination of 'eccentric paintings' of the Edo period," invoked the concept of *kisō*, based on Tsuji's book. It featured works by eight artists—six from Tsuji's book, alongside pieces by Hakuin and Kiitsu (1795-1858). It would be reasonable to say that the Zen priest artist Hakuin, in respect of *asobi*, with his doodle-like works possessing ample popular appeal, and representative artist of the Edo Rinpa school Kiitsu, in respect of *kazari*, with his elaborate works, were easily mixed into the melting pot of *kisō*.

Contemporary Art and the Lineage of Eccentrics

As seen above, Tsuji, from the moment he began to unpack the concept of *kisō*, focused on extracting a common denominator between *kisō* and the styles of contemporary art. For example, the characteristic of "proliferation" which he saw as the core of Jakuchū images, communicates with its referent, Tadashi's "infinitely expanding world." Despite the original intention of the artist, the image that penetrates into space and proliferates infinitely unsettles the viewer. Tsuji took Jakuchū's *Dogs* (*Hyakken-zu*) as an example, describing how the appearance and expression of canines filling the frame at first gives an odd impression rather than being cute, while proliferous, amoeba-like spots or water drop-shaped patterns on the dogs' bodies' function as an automatic self-proliferation, freely and gradually seeping into the external space. (Tsuji 2005, 149-51)[20]

20. Most of all, motifs of division and multiplication, and the resulting sensitivity of bizarreness and precariousness occasionally emerged in the works of artists of the time. A little further back, there is an image of shredded, dispersed, and proliferated bodies in Kawara On's *Bathroom* series, *Proliferous Chain Reaction* by Kudō Tetsumi, who was active in the Yomiuri Salon of Independents and associated with an anti-art movement, and in Nakanishi Natsuyuki's depiction of proliferating material, and, furthermore, Kusama Yayoi's trademark infinitely repeating water drop motif. There was no shared ideology between them, but these were common formative elements that could be found in the works of avant-garde artists in the 1960s.

Yet Tsuji, since the publication of the first edition of *Lineage of Eccentrics*, had conceived the connecting node for contemporary popular culture elements and *kisō*, saying that "the contemporary period's cutting-edge form that takes manga, posters, and wall paintings as its powerful arena for exhibition" peculiarly coincides with the artists of *kisō*. The time at which a trend in Japanese contemporary art inspired by popular culture known as Japanese Neo-pop reached out to *kisō* in a happy encounter roughly overlaps with the emergence of the Jakuchū boom (or Japanese art boom), thirty years after Tsuji's conception.[21]

The most popular practitioner is Murakami Takashi, who mixes contemporary Japanese subculture such as animation and games with the flatness of the classical art, formulating an art theory known as "Superflat." Murakami points to Tsuji's *Lineage of Eccentrics* as the basis of his theory. Known to be a fan of the book from his school years, Murakami exhibited in a 1994 solo exhibition (*Which is Tomorrow?—Fall in Love*, SCAI The Bathhouse, Tokyo) parodies of classic works that remind one of *oko-e*, which Tsuji had emphasized in the book.[22] Given this opportunity, Murakami and Tsuji met for the first time, and since then, they have created a number of collaborative works. Beyond the dimension of simply being inspired by the lineage of eccentrics, Murakami has focused on common aspects—visuality and gaze—found in the works of the artists from Tsuji's lineage of eccentrics and contemporary animation. In *Superflat,* an exhibition in which Murakami participated not only as an artist but also a curator, he brought in works by Edo-period artists such as Jakuchū, Shōhaku, Kanō Sansetsu, and Hokusai, displaying them with the works of animator Kanada Yoshinori to create a hybrid space. In other words, the exhibition obfuscated the border between art and subculture, and "high" and "low," flattening any pre-existing hierarchy. The exhibition toured three cities—Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Seattle— and was a sensation in the US.

"A Theory of Super Flat Japanese Art" (Murakami 2000), an essay Murakami

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21. The policy of "Cool Japan" that arose together with the Japanese art boom in the 2000s also provides an interesting perspective related to this. The policy's goal was to connect popular culture such as animation and games, and by extension Japanese culture in general, with exports. It placed particular emphasis on the popular culture of the Edo period, represented by Ukiyoe, in forming a contact point with the present period. Jakuchū and lineage of eccentrics were also attempted to be made a key part of the process. See Arai Kei (2019) on how the Japanese art boom and Cool Japan intersect.

22. In relation to this, Tsuji had in mind at the time artists such as Okamoto Tarō (mural painting), Yokoo Tadanori (posters), and Tominaga Ichirō and Tanioka Yasuji (comics) to formulate an argument that at the end of the lineage of eccentrics lay the artistic culture of contemporary Japan. It is understood that Murakami took a cue from this (Fukuzumi 2010, 67).

wrote for the exhibition catalogue, uses Jakuchū's *Roosters* (figure 4) to argue in detail for, and theoretically support, the concept of Superflat. A frame filled with its motif (overlapping images of roosters) results in an "all-over-the-place" composition without any central focus. This effect was produced according to a methodology completely different from that of Western art's single-point perspective. This kind of composition plays with the viewer's gaze, leading it around the work in zigzags, in what Murakami calls a Superflat visual experience (Murakami 2000). This is linked with a basic production principle of contemporary animation, which condenses a number of individually existing layers into a single flat plane through the movement of scanning eyes.

Murakami, who also made the argument for "art as a business" named his studio and company Kaikai Kiki Co. Ltd. in 2001. This name, although in reverse order, originates from the Japanese adjective "*kikikaikai*," used to describe the eccentric but fascinating works of painter Kanō Eitoku in *The History of Japanese Paintings* (*Honchōgashi*, 1679), a collection of art criticism from the Edo period. Murakami paid attention to the appropriation of subculture and *otaku* images, cultural the politicality of Japanese subculture before and after the war (US-Japan relations), and the relationship between art and the commercial sector (capitalism). From around 2007, Murakami reflected these interests through parodies of works that paid homage to Hakuin's Zen paintings, Shōhaku's *Dragon and Tiger Painting on Vertical Panels* (*Ryūko zu fusuma-e*), and Jakuchū's newly recovered *Elephant and Whale Screens* (*Zō to kujira-zu byōbu*), suggesting a return to "tradition." From 2009, *New Trends in Art* (*Geijutsu shinchō*) published a collaborative series of Tsuji and Murakami's "Japanese Picture Matching" (*Nihon e-awase*). The term "picture matching" (*e-awase*) indicates a kind of amusement in which the noblemen of the Heian period, divided into two groups, competed over the superiority of their paintings in terms of their techniques or subject matter. While Tsuji mostly wrote essays on traditional art, Murakami responded to his writings by producing new works.[23] This project finally led to the grand-scale work *The 500 Arhats*, a piece said to have induced a change in Murakami's style after the Great East Japan Earthquake.[24]

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23. Among a total of twenty-one works, the most frequently adopted theme was painters belonging to Tsuji's *Lineage of Eccentrics*: Kanō Eitoku (first), Jakuchū (second, fourth), Soga (sixth), Hakuin (seventh), Rosetsu (fifteenth and sixteenth).

24. "*Nippon e-awase*" was later published as a book entitled *Heated Discussion! Japanese Art History* (*Nettō! Nihon bijutsu shi*, Shinchōsa, 2014). Meanwhile, Murakami's company, Kaikai Kiki, printed English-language versions of the book and *Lineage of Eccentrics: Matabei to Kuniyoshi*, an English edition of *Kisō no keifu*, the introduction to which was written by Murakami himself. On

In Place of a Conclusion: The Prospects for *Kisō*

Underlying Tsuji's concept of *kisō* is an intention not to be bound by established ideas. For this purpose, Tsuji, as the occasion demands, refers to both internal elements that have been handed down from the past and external elements that are Western or modern. For example, the reason Tsuji substituted the term "decorativeness" (decorative art), introduced from the West, with the more everyday word *kazari* can be understood as a strategy to restore the internal, which had been undermined or forgotten during the transition from modern to contemporary. Conversely, Tsuji's effort to include "ugly" and "grotesque" in new criteria of beauty can be interpreted as an attempt to actively embrace the external of Maniérisme, Surrealism, and contemporary art.

The theory of *kisō* seems to be located at the opposite end of the spectrum from the lineage of *wabi* aesthetics, which have traditionally received much attention in discussions of Japanese culture. The main characteristic of *wabi* culture can be summarized as a sentiment of restraint and modesty, as well as an avoidance of anything artificial or fictitious, and harmonizing with nature. Compared to such a modest theory of Japanese culture, which is introverted, formalistic, and in pursuit of a "beauty in absence," the idea of *kisō* is exaggerated, dynamic, and coarse. It is therefore natural that *kisō* is considered a vivacious, Expressionist lineage. From this, one may recall a "tradition debate" originating in "Thoughts on Jōmon Earthenware" (*Jōmon doki ron*), by Okamoto Tarō in the 1950s.[25] This is because it, to a degree, communicates with the bizarre, dynamic, and lively characteristics of Jōmon, often symbolized as a hunting culture, as well as its contrast with the delicate, flat character of the pastoral Yayoi period. However, as can be seen from his definition of *wabi* as an "inornate *fūryū*," or "negative Expressionism" (Tsuji and Yamashita 2003, 186), Tsuji does not distinguish or exclude one or the other.[26] The strategy that divides the *kisō* of

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the relationship between Murakami's *The 500 Arhats* and Tsuji, see Choi Jaehyuk (2018).

25. See Cho Hyunjung (2015) on Okamoto's theories on Jōmon and tradition.

26. The Japanese tradition debate in the field of architecture, initiated by Okamoto, continued as a confrontation between "Jōmon versus Yayoi" (Dionysus versus Apollo), argued representatively by Shirai Seiichi. This opposition clearly reveals an intention to overcome the latter through the former. Okamoto Tarō's plan, however, did not actually seek an exclusion (or absence) of Yayoi; rather, he understood the situation as one in which the "compatibility, or coexistence, of these two heterogeneous traditions that cannot be reconciled or converged is the true nature of Japanese tradition yet to be abstracted" (See Park Sohyun 2010). Compared to Okamoto's argument concerning opposite poles, in which he talked about explosions and energy resulting from the simultaneous existence of the two heterogeneous traditions at each extreme, the following view seems more of a moderate compromise; however, it is possible to understand Tsuji's view that does

yin and the *kisō* of yang (or yin *fūryū* or yang *fūryū*) and spares a space for expansion re-emerges here.

Likewise, the theory of *kisō*, which evolved through embracing and reconstructing two opposing elements of universality and particularity, mainstream and avant-garde, yin and yang, appears to be inconsistent and illogical. However, it is through this flexibility that it has been able successfully to gain popularity. Tsuji once mentioned that "a great number of art historians and art critics fail to use everyday vocabulary but use difficult Sino-Japanese words or translated terminology, perplexing their readers. They thereby disengage art from society and face a dead end, the situation already faced by contemporary art today" (Tsuji and Yamashita 2003, 180). His concern about, and antipathy toward, art isolating itself in its own logic or academic discourse led to a pursuit of pro-audience art history writing and communication through exhibitions featuring the familiar, connecting appropriately with the Japanese art boom.

Meanwhile, from Tsuji's contention that he tries to "understand *kisō* not as a special product of Edo paintings but a grand feature of the Japanese people's formative expression that transcends time" (Tsuji 2004, 247; postscript of *Lineage of Eccentrics*, 1988 edition), it is possible to capture a sustained collective desire for self-affirmation repeatedly attempted in the arts since the beginning of the modern era. The generation of scholars of aesthetics and art history before Tsuji, such as Okakura Tenshin and Yashiro Yukio, had also attempted to extract and investigate the characteristics of Japanese beauty and art using particular terms and concepts. This kind of "copywriter-like" tradition is revealed in *kisō*, alongside its supporting concepts *asobi*, *kazari*, and animism. The policy of Cool Japan also aims to seize the golden opportunity of the Japanese art boom and the boom of *kisō*. As an example, one of the main projects of the national undertaking "Japonismes 2018," which "presents culture and arts events that introduce many facets of Japanese culture not yet known to the world" with the catchphrase "the world again is heated with Japanese culture" was a Paris exhibition of Jakuchū's "The Colorful Realm of Living Beings" (*Dōshoku sai-e*) (Petite Palais, Paris, September 15 to October 14, 2018).[27] Jakuchū now seems to be preparing for an attack on artists representative of Japanese art following Hokusai. However, it is not possible to define the concept of *kisō* simply in terms of cultural nationalism, which provided the motive

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not consider the two heterogeneous features to be in conflict with one another within Okamoto's "magnetic field." In addition, it is notable that Okamoto's proposition that "art should not be beautiful" also presented the aesthetic potential of ugliness and influenced contemporary artists of Tsuji's generation.

27. Details of projects and exhibitions can be found at https://japonismes.org/.

power for this abnormal enthusiasm (the Japanese art boom) over and above traditional art.

Tsuji concludes his autobiography, published when he was aged eighty-two, with a sense of regret, saying that "the range of *kisō* goes back to the ancient times and is mixed with *asobi*, *kazari*, and animism, thus making it possible to at least vaguely see a larger picture of the concept. I believe this image will become clearer with a deeper knowledge of Chinese and Korean art, but here is the limit of my capability" (Tsuji 2014c, 253). In *Ways to View Japanese Art* (*Nihon bijutsu no mikata*), Tsuji said: "with a theory of Japanese art without self-righteous nationalism, with a wider view prospecting the exchange between the entirety of Asian art or art of the world, I expect the emergence of a new theory of Japanese art which contemplates 'what Japanese is,' as well as a new theory of Chinese, Korean, and Asian art holding this kind of wider perspective" (Tsuji 1992, 109).[28]

The above position in one respect accords with an atmosphere that ostensibly, not to say internally, pursues the co-existence of the three East Asian countries with enthusiasm. In the academia of art history, there has been a discussion on the possibility of integrating the theory or history of East Asian art that transcends the Japan-centered theory of East Asian Art that has had its own history since Okakura.[29] What has been pointed out is a field that could actually be written as East Asian art history, in other words that the common elements that have existed in East Asian art from the pre-modern era have involved religious art related to Buddhism and Taoism, as well as literati painting (ink painting) which is characteristic of the cultural sphere in which Chinese characters are used. Then, would it not be possible for the concept of *kisō*, suggested as a key concept in new Japanese art history, to evolve beyond a category describing past Japanese art into a new cue for viewing a future art history covering a broader region? "Flatness" which has been described as the

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28. The thinking that first considered and discussed universal aspects of the humanity when constructing the concept of *kisō* also communicates with this. Regarding Yamashita's opinion, which tried to comprehend Tsuji's touchstones for Japanese art—*kazari*, *asobi*, and animism—as directly connected with something Jōmonesque—the "first" culture of Japan, which was rediscovered after the war—Tsuji corrected Yamashita's words on the spot, explaining that these elements were something indigenous to Japan but also something international (Tsuji and Yamashita 2016, 99).

29. The thirtieth volume of *Misulsa nondan* (Art History Forum, Center for Art Studies, Korea, 2010) was a special issue discussing the possibility of constructing an East Asian art history. Contributors to the issue included Ogawa Hiromitsu (University of Tokyo), Shih Shou-chien (National Taiwan University), Satō Dōshin (Tokyo University of the Arts), and Hong Sun-p'yo (Hongik University).

central characteristic of Japanese art, as well as *kisō*, a feature of commoner art originating from liberating ideas and expressions, are also not elements that are, or that have to be, exclusive to a specific region. Tsuji has also mentioned how the burlesque and liberating carefreeness of Korean art's folk paintings and *Punchŏng* celadon (Korean stoneware with a bluish-green tone) display precisely the concept of *kisō* (Tsuji 2014c. 192-93). Examining both the common and distinguishing aspects of *kisō* in East Asian art, with wary watchfulness for any interpretations bound by ideology or hegemony, as well as an attitude promoting the endless relativization of the frame of one's own art history, accelerated since the beginning of modern times, will allow for richer art historical understanding and cultural planning.

• *Translated by BAE Yeon Kyung*

Acknowledgements | This article is the translated version of the author's Korean article "'Kisang ŭi kyebo': misulsa ŭi taejunghwa, hok ŭn Ilbon misulsa saero ssŭgi," published in *Ilbon pipŏng* [Korean journal of Japanese studies] 20 (2019), with the permission of Sŏul Taehakkyo Ilbon Yŏn'guso [Institute for Japanese Studies, Seoul National University]. The translation and the English editing of this article were supported by (Chae) Hakbong Changhakhoe (Hakbong Scholarship Foundation).

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